

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 FEA-01 EB-07

OMB-01 INT-05 TRSE-00 COME-00 CIEP-01 SAM-01 /063 W

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R 051723Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2028

USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, OPEC

SUBJ: ALGERIANS NIX ALLIGATOR CLIPS

1. THE ILLEGAL, BUT WIDELY USED, PRACTICE OF FILING PRE-TAPED AUDIO-CASSETTE COPY BY ATTACHING ALLIGATOR CLIPS TO THE SMALL MICROPHONE INSIDE A TELEPHONE HAS BEEN EXPRESSLY FORBIDDEN TO REPORTERS AT THE PALAIS DES NATIONS PRESS ROOM BY ALGERIAN AUTHORITIES. FIRST CASE WAS VOA'S JOHN BUE, WHO WAS DETAINED AND TAKEN TO THE POLICE ROOM, WHERE AUTHORITIES CONFISCATED HIS TAPE RECORDER, CASSETTES, AND IDENTITY CARDS AND HELD THEM FOR ABOUT TWO HOURS. ACCORDING TO BUE, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE ALGERIANS HAD LISTENED TO HIS CASSETTES, ACTUALLY A SPEECH BY ALGERIAN FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTEFLIKA. TO SHOW THERE WAS NO BIAS, THE BBC CORRESPONDENT AND, ACCORDING TO ABC-TV'S LOU CIOFFI, A NUMBER OF OTHERS GOT THE SAME TREATMENT.

2. SEVERAL JOURNALISTS HAVE TRIED TO PERSUADE THE ALGERIANS, INCLUDING THE PRESS ADVISOR IN THE PRESIDENCE, TO CHANGE THEIR MINDS, BUT TO NO AVAIL. THERE IS MUCH BUCK PASSING. PTT SAYS IT'S A POLICY QUESTION; THE PRESIDENCY SAYS IT'S A TECHNICAL PROBLEM; AND BOTH SAY

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IT'S A SECURITY PROBLEM. ANYWAY, IT IS NOT BEING DONE.

3. MOST CORRESPONDENTS GET AROUND THE RESTRICTION BY FILING FROM THEIR HOTEL ROOM TELEPHONES. UNFORTUNATELY, THE HOTEL IS ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES FROM THE SITE OF THE SUMMIT. ONE OF THE AMERICAN JOURNALISTS HAS PROMISED TO FILE A "BATTLE OF THE ALLIGATOR CLIPS" PIECE AFTER THE SUMMIT ENDS.

4. ACCORDING TO THIS MORNING'S "EL MOUDJAHID", THERE ARE 800 JOURNALISTS HERE(WE ESTIMATE 200 OURSELVES) SO THERE ARE BOUND TO BE PROBLEMS AND FRAYED TEMPERS.

5. DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE PRESS AND INFORMATION DIVISION OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TOLD PAO THAT THE ALGERIANS WERE DISAPPOINTED BY THE LEVEL OF CORRESPONDENTS SENT BY AMERICAN MEDIA TO COVER THE SUMMIT. ALGERIANS FEEL THIS IS THEIR SHINING HOUR AND SHOULD BE TREATED ACCORDINGLY. MOST AMERICANS HERE ARE REGIONAL CORRESPONDENTS BASED IN BEIRUT, PARIS, BONN, BRUSSELS, ETC. PERHAPS THERE IS SOME SOLACE IN HAVING PIERRE SALINGER HERE. HE IS COVERING THE STORY FOR "L'EXPRESS."
PARKER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, INFORMATION MEDIA, JOURNALISTS, SUMMIT MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ALGIER00604
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750078-0660
From: ALGIERS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750382/aaaacvua.tel
Line Count: 84
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 APR 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <17 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALGERIANS NIX ALLIGATOR CLIPS
TAGS: ENRG, OCON, PFOR, AG, OPEC
To: STATE USIA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006